

American Medical Association

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**News Release****SPECIAL EMBARGO FOR RELEASE: 10 a.m. (ET) TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 1994****Media Advisory:** To contact the researchers, see the attached list following this news release.**LIVING WITH A SMOKER INCREASES A WOMAN'S RISK OF LUNG CANCER**
Lung cancer risk is 30 percent greater for women who live with a spouse who smokes

WASHINGTON--Long-term exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) increases risk of lung cancer in women who have never smoked, and the risk is twice as great for women who have also been exposed to ETS during childhood, according to a study in this week's *Journal of the American Medical Association*. It is the largest study of ETS in nonsmokers ever conducted.

The study is a continuation of a previous study that had been included in the EPA report which concluded in January, 1993, that ETS is responsible for approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths a year in the United States. The new study, by Elizabeth T.H. Fontham, Dr.PH, Louisiana State University Medical Center, New Orleans, La., and colleagues, was released during a news conference at the National Press Club.

The researchers studied 653 female lung cancer patients who had never smoked, and a control group of 1,253 women selected from the population by random digit dialing and from the Health Care Financing Administration files for women aged 65 and older.

The study found that the increased risk of lung cancer among women ever exposed to ETS during adult life in the household is 24 percent, in occupational settings 39 percent, and in social settings 50 percent. Household exposure includes family members in addition to spouses.

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(ETS)

Dr. Fontham says: "Although most previous studies of ETS have focused on nonsmokers exposed to ETS from family members, these findings suggest that the relative risk of lung cancer from ETS exposure in the workplace and in social settings in the U.S. is at least as great as that encountered in the home."

The researchers say tobacco use by spouse(s) was associated with a 30 percent excess risk of lung cancer. They also say: "An increasing relative risk of lung cancer was observed with increasing pack years of spousal ETS, such that an 80 percent excess risk of lung cancer was observed for subjects with 80 or more pack-years of exposure from spouse."

Pack-years of cigarette smoke exposure from spouse were calculated by multiplying the number of packs smoked per day by the number of years the spouse smoked cigarettes while living with the study subject. For instance, smoking two packs a day for 10 years equals 20 pack years.

The researchers also write: "Elevated risks associated with adult ETS exposures were observed in women with and without childhood exposures, but the elevations in risk for women exposed during childhood were about twice as high as those without childhood exposures. At the highest level of exposure an adjusted odds ratio of 3.25 was observed among women reporting childhood exposure compared to 1.77 for those reporting no childhood exposure."

The women in the multi-center study were residents of metropolitan Atlanta and Houston diagnosed between December 1, 1985 and November 30, 1988, and women who lived in 1989 and 1990 in New Orleans, Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area.

The largest proportion of lung cancer cases and controls (about 60 percent) were white. The study included a large proportion of minorities, including Asian-Americans (16 percent), African Americans (12 percent), and Hispanics (nine percent).

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Approximately 40 percent of women in the study reported an annual household income of less than \$20,000 a year. Compared with controls, lung cancer cases tended to have a lower level of education attainment: 66.3 percent of cases and 52.6 percent of controls had no more than a high school education.

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For more information: contact the AMA's Ray McNally at 312/464-4843.

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